

BOOK REVIEWS

IN CHARGE OF
M. E. CAMERON



ADVENTURES OF AN ARMY NURSE IN TWO WARS. Edited from the Diary and Correspondence of Mary Phinney, Baroness von Olnhausen, by James Phinney Munroe. Little, Brown & Company, publishers, 254 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

This story of a woman's life goes far to prove the statement so often repeated and so persistently combated by all of us, in action if not in word, and especially while we are still in the early day of our experience, that to know life it is not enough to know the pleasant parts, the joys of loving companionship, the pleasures of congenial work with ample compensation and generous leisure, the advantages of good birth and liberal education, but that we must know hardship, sorrow, and suffering to make complete the perfectly rounded whole of life.

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit, nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three-part pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"

I have never read a more convincing testimony of a happy old age than the closing pages of the book present; and what a life lies behind those cheerful last days! A life spent willingly, prodigally, in the service of others. It is the more extraordinary when we reflect that this public activity, if one may so term it, only began with her widowhood at the age of forty-two years, after her short married life of two years. What she was up to the time of her marriage we are not advised of to any extent, but we gather that she was a cheerful, busy soul, entering heartily into the interests of the other members of her family, doing her share of household work, donning a pre-bloomer costume to work in the garden, assisting her father in his favorite recreation of grafting trees till late at night, returning from long tramps in the woods, with now a snake or a toad, or again a batch of beetles in her pockets, and when at her father's death she goes to find employment in the cotton mill there are no lamentations or protestings; it seems to have been taken up briskly and with keen interest as a new side of life from which as much as possible was to be gotten.

Her experiences in the two wars—the Civil War in America and the Franco-Prussian War—are wonderfully similar, allowing for difference in conditions and nationality. War seems to bring things to very much the same level, whether it is on this side of the water or the other.

Her letters continue all through to present everything that will brighten and modify the parts which must be horrible, being, as they are, true and vivid pictures of the incidents of war. There are wistful notes in her foreign letters that make us realize the fact that brightness is not kept without a hard struggle at

times. She reached Berlin November 5, 1870, and on February 16, 1871, she writes: "I have often had the excuse of feeling too sad to write, but I think never, until now, too happy. Yesterday, for the first time since I left America, I received letters from home." Again, April 19, 1871: "I'm just glad enough to be back here, feeling that now I can hear regularly from you, and you also from me. You can't know what a cross it has been to me, and nothing but my Yankee grit ever carried me through." Her last letter, written a short time before her death, at the age of eighty-four, is by no means the production of a broken-down old woman. She was included in a company of German women of Boston who were received by Prince Henry of Prussia when in 1902 he visited America. She describes the event in the following: "The leaves are most beautiful. I have never seen any handsomer. They came the day I went to see the Prince, but I did not take him any, and have regretted since that I did not; but it was so formidable, and I am such a fool, I only wanted it over. He was most gracious, and not at all formidable; shook my hand twice, just as any other *feller* would. I am glad now I had the courage to go, especially on account of the younger nieces and nephews, who were so anxious for me to do so. They are making a great fuss in the papers—of course, it's all exaggerated. Really, the whole thing was what anyone would have done much better than I did, only I had the luck. How splendidly you would have carried out the meeting! I forgot to bow low or to address him with any title; so stupid!"

At this time she is engaged—after several ventures in other lines which did not result satisfactorily—in earning her living by designing and working embroideries.

One feels somewhat the inadequate recognition given either in this country or Germany to the service rendered the sick and wounded. There is the Iron Cross—and some other bauble. She, however, never looked for any other than the satisfaction of having stupendous work to do and accomplishing the same in spite of overwhelming difficulties. Without training in nursing, she set herself to learn of anyone who would teach her, and the letters of Dr. Palmer and others testify to her ability acquired in such a precarious fashion. That she suffered somewhat for want of a very liberal education she freely confesses, asking her reader if "ankle" is spelled with a "k" or a "c," or she gets along, she says, "amazingly well" with her accounts when wages to her help are twenty-five cents per day, because "there are no sevens or nines in the figures."

We are inclined to find fault with Mr. Munroe for his lack of dates. We could wish the portrait dated. One wants to know at what period in her wonderful career it represents her. But we are deeply grateful for what he has given, and most particularly for allowing the letters and diary to convey their own impression and retain the individuality of the writer. The book is very heartily recommended. It is sure to become known to a large class of readers outside of nursing circles, and its success and popularity are safe to predict.

THE CRUEL SIDE OF WAR. With the Army of the Potomac. Letters from the Head-quarters of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Peninsular Campaign in Virginia in 1862. By Katherine Wormeley. Roberts Bros., publishers, Boston.

Reading the adventures of the Baroness von Olnhausen brings to mind a book published first under the title "The Other Side of War," and later in 1898 with the title changed to "The Cruel Side of War." It is a series of personal letters